

REV. DR. BETHUNE'S
ADDRESS,

BEFORE THE

PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF PENNSYLVANIA,

NOVEMBER, 1840.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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EXCHANGED



George Bancroft Esq
with the author's
right regard

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ADDRESS

BEFORE

THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

NOVEMBER 30th, 1840.

BY

GEORGE W. BETHUNE.



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PHILADELPHIA, DEC. 1, 1840.

SIR,

It is our agreeable duty, on behalf of the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania, to communicate to you the following Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday morning, December 1.—“RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Dr. Bethune, for the eloquent and instructive Address delivered before us on Monday evening, Nov. 30th, and that a copy be requested for publication.”

With much respect,

We remain, yours,

WM. E. LEHMAN, Jr.
B. B. REATH,
HORATIO G. JONES, Jr.
ALFRED B. TAYLOR,
J. H. B. M'LELLAN.

REV. DR. BETHUNE.

DEC. 3, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,

According to your request, I send you the manuscript of my Address.

Yours, with sincere regard,

GEO. W. BETHUNE.

Messrs. Wm. E. Lehman, jr., B. B. Reath,
Horatio G. Jones, jr., Alfred B.
Taylor, J. H. B. M'Lellan.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,

Members of the Philomathean Society
of the University of Pennsylvania,

It was a happy inspiration which first suggested the delivery of these addresses. Happy it must be for you thus to be assured of sympathy from your elder brothers in study, and happy, I am sure, for us, who, covered with the dust of crowded thoroughfares, and worn with the burdens of public duty, are permitted to separate ourselves, though but for a brief hour, from the busy people, and retire again within the cool grove of academic life. We may not be allowed to say that we envy you your fresh spirits and classic exertations, for it were unmanly and unchristian to shrink, even in thought, from the offices which God and our fellow men require at our hands, and sobriety of zeal best becomes them; but you cannot know, until you have felt it, the zest with which memory turns in after life to our growing years, and the intellectual Palæstra, where in generous emulation we trained the sinews of our youthful minds, and warmed the courage of our hearts for the serious struggles of active manhood. To some of us the retrospect is sad; not that the days of our youth are gone by; it is the lot of mortals to change and

pass away; but that we availed ourselves so little of the fair occasions and rich opportunities which have gone with them. The time is yet yours when you may sow in hope. We are already gathering our harvest, and its scantiness too keenly convinces us, that the regrets and labours of later life can but poorly make up for the neglects of youth.

It is in youth that the *rudiments* of knowledge must be laid deep within us, for which little time can be spared from the necessities of actual application. The proper purpose of education is not to acquaint the young mind with all that can be known; for the inquiring soul shall never cease learning in this life or the immortality which is to come; but to call its nascent powers forth into exercise, and furnishing the clew and methods by which inquiry may be wisely and most profitably pursued, to impel them on to the pursuit. The man, without such an advantage, however studiously he may be inclined, is like one entering a vast library stored full of the best treatises and demonstrations, yet having no catalogue by which to discover the volumes that contain the science he seeks. Uneducated genius may accomplish much from its innate impulsiveness and foresight; but none can tell how much more it might have accomplished under the direction of sober rule; and the world has great reason to mourn over the time, the energy, and the paper, which has been worse than wasted by gifted men in the revival of

exploded errors, and the assertion of crude though perhaps dazzling hypotheses. But for such, man might have been ever going on in the way of truth, instead of wandering so often after *ignes fatui*, which spring from darkness and unhealthy damps (*loci paludosi et tetricosi*), or being lost in the dust thrown up by scuffling polemics and their puppet-like partisans. That teacher makes a grave mistake who bids his pupils at once to think independently for themselves. The human mind, so liable to err at sixty, is not infallible at twenty-one, or even before that important period. We must first be taught *how* to think. No mechanic would permit his apprentice to handle keen-edged tools at his own untaught discretion, as he might do more execution upon his own fingers than elsewhere; but the faculties of our minds are far more dangerous to ourselves than sharpened steel, and mental and moral suicide has often been the end of those who have used them in rash and ignorant self-confidence. To think well we must know the rules of thinking; and the best method of learning those rules, under the blessing of Heaven, is to inquire how the mighty minds of the past have thought before us. An itch after novelties is mistaken by some for a sort of heavenly inspiration, lifting the soul above the necessity of those slow and vulgar methods, logic and induction, by which Aristotle and Bacon crept towards the truth; but if we are forced to admit that there is any thing sacred

about it, let it be called *ignis sacer*, which is Pliny's name for St. Anthony's fire.*

It is in youth those habits, which constitute character, should be carefully and religiously formed, that the time and pains necessary for the confirmation of the good may not be lost in correcting the bad, if indeed they can ever be wholly eradicated. The lower tendencies of our nature early struggle to gain power over us, and can be repressed only by preoccupying the heart and mind with higher aspirations and engagements. Idleness is never long innocent. We must be doing something, and if what we do be not good, it will certainly be evil.

Quæritis Ægisthus, quare sit factus adulter?

In promptu causa est, desidiosus erat.†

Or, as quaint Richard Baxter says, (if it be not unlawful to quote him so close to Ovid) "An idle man's brains are the devil's workshop;" which good Dr. Watts renders in his *Divine Songs for Infant Minds*, (a little book many grown persons might be wiser for getting by heart)

Satan finds some mischief still

For idle hands to do.

But independently of this, the *habit of labour* is essential to success. The primeval curse, "In the

* Plin. xxvi. 11.

† Ovid: Remed. Am. 161, 162.

sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," is upon us all, though by a wise submission it may be turned into blessing.

It is true in the physical world *Nil sine sudore*. That is worth nothing which cost nothing. We may, perhaps, pass it upon the ignorance of others as of value, but we defraud them when we do so. Vain shall ever be found all expedients, however plausible, to enrich a country, otherwise than from the products of toil. Credit is very useful in its sphere, but promises can never supply the place of what the earth yields only to the labouring hand. We can neither eat them nor wear them, nor can they long pay debts. But it is beyond the power of the worst tyranny to impoverish an intelligent and industrious people. That sense of self-approving independence, which springs from the consciousness of owing no man any thing, and of having earned one's bread, trains the soul to an indomitable courage; and the labour which gave it, has already nerved the arm to strike down the oppressor. The God of righteousness loves the honest man, and the God of battles fights on his side. It is he, whose self-imposed necessities have made him dependent upon the caprice of others, whose hand is open to the bribe, but dares not grasp the sword.

It is true in the moral world. There is but little merit in doing well when it is easy to do well. Our word virtue, from the Latin *virtus*, shows that its prac-

tice demands courage and energy. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." It is easy to let loose the tiger in our hearts, and to grapple with a foe in desperation or hate; but it is hard to deny the uneasiness of evil desire, to beat down insurgent appetite, to crucify a bitter passion, to keep an unweary watch against subtle temptation, to maintain our integrity when we get no return from the world but malice, and to remain steadfast with the faithful few against the jeers of the profligate many. Fabricius with his dinner of herbs, after he had sent back the bribes of Pyrrhus, shows a better dignity than Coriolanus at the head of the Volscian armies before affrighted Rome; nor was the conqueror of Hannibal ever so great as when he dismissed his Carthaginian captive safe in her unpolluted beauty. Such self-denial is not the impulse of a moment. It is the heroic triumph of long self-resistance. It is the noble ostentation of victory after many an inward battle. It is the blessed reward of labour, hard, constant, and unflinching, in rooting out pernicious sin, and in cultivating the impeded growth of good principles. Without the habit of such moral labour within ourselves, formed in youth, and assiduously cultivated, we shall never have the nerve to resist a present temptation, nor the strength to persevere in the right and the honourable.

I have spoken rather of the passive virtues, as they are called, than of the active, because those

are the more difficult and rare, and when they prevail in the soul, the others are never wanting. Obedience is best learned by the things that we suffer. The language of inspiration confirms this necessity of moral labour to the maintenance of sufficient virtue. He who would enter into the right way by the strait gate, must strive to put off criminal self, before his soul can find space to pass through. He that would attain immortal life and honour must be a follower until death of the Man of sorrows, who worked while it was day; who, as he went about doing good, kept up a constant fight with temptation, and who passed from the ignominy of the cross he had made illustrious by his meekness, to a coronation of glory as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. It was not the fire that made the martyr, but the heaven-trained spirit which triumphed over the flame in the pureness of its charity. This "made the crowns of the suffering ones splendid, gave them a majesty of shine and an imperial glory."* Their trials were first the school, and then the happy occasions of their virtue. They are now ranked before cherubim and seraphim, the most noble army of the living God. Those who die in the Lord are they who then "rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Emulate their example, and you shall share in their reward. Nor forget that our own strength must ever be found

* Richard Allestree.

unequal to the duty; but ask strength from on high, a right spirit and a new heart, the true *mens divini*or, which God alone can bestow.

It is true in the intellectual world. The heights of science are steep, and to ascend them we must, like the mountaineer, be strong and sturdy. Without a habit of patient application, no mind has ever attained decided greatness in any walk. Such has been the progress of knowledge, that no genius, however vigorous, can at once leap to the advance. Every new step onward (for I speak not of eccentricities to the right or left, which astonish the vulgar, and by none but them are mistaken for originality,) is more difficult than the last. We may easily become notorious by startling errors, but to excel in the one path of truth, which has been and is trodden by so many master spirits, nay, to follow them, even at a long interval, requires not only boldness but endurance. That endurance cannot come except from a habit of labour, early acquired and steadily maintained. *Posse tollere taurum qui vitulum sustulerit.* It was by beginning when a boy, to carry a suckling heifer, that the shoulders of Milo, the Crotonian, became strong enough to carry an ox. The Olympic Athlete was crowned, not for that day's victory, but for seven long years of determined, constant training, which enabled him to win it. Thus must the mind be disciplined.

It has passed into a proverb, that precocious

youth rarely makes an able manhood; and some physiologists will say, that it is because the brain is early overwrought; but, generally, the true reason may be found in the want of this habit of labour. Facility of memory and quickness of perception render the lad's tasks easy and allow him much hurtful leisure for relaxing indulgences; while the growth of indolence is less marked from the readiness with which he excels his slower companions; nay, often his over-anxious Mamma rather dissuades her prodigy from study, lest like the self-burning tree of Guinea he should be consumed by the fire of his own genius, and the world lose the advantage of his mature greatness by such a melancholy instance of spontaneous combustion. Naturally the idol of friends and teachers, he becomes presumptuous upon his powers, and contemns the necessity of steady exertion, until the severer trials of active life come upon him, and then it is too late to remedy the fatal neglect. The very dunce of his class, if industrious and persevering, will leave him far behind in respectable usefulness. It is in this way, that early talent, given by God as a blessing, is not unfrequently made a curse. There have been few great men who did not give promise of greatness in childhood. Melancthon at twenty-one was in Greek, the master of Luther, then a Doctor of Divinity. Luther himself was noted for his youthful learning; and yet we do not find that either Melanc-

thon, or Luther, or Erasmus (most precocious of the three,) was made an idiot by an overwrought brain. It were most unkind to smile at the fears of fond parents; but they may rest assured, that there is less danger to their young Gracchi, to be apprehended from laborious reading, than from surfeits upon sweetmeats and compliments, or a dandyism in premature long coats and Chestnut Street exhibitions.

Besides, without labour, we cannot acquire the power of *abstraction*, so necessary to withdraw the inquirer from the temptation of present pleasure, the bias of prejudice, the corruption of selfish interest, and the many distracting impertinences of the surrounding world. To know truth aright, we must be *alone* and *candid* with it as the Christian with his God. We must understand our subject in all its bearings, yet stript of all delusive circumstances. We must collect our scattered thoughts, and condense them as through a lens upon it. But to do this, we must first have obtained an habitual mastery over our senses, passions, and faculties, which was never yet obtained without many a conflict. You know not, and God grant that you may never know, the inward anguish and shame which a mind, not unconscious of natural force, but idle from habit, and unfurnished from idleness, feels, when seeing open opportunities for honourable enterprise, it is compelled to forego the advantage, because unequal to an effort which others make with ease. Years of idle plea-

sure are dearly bought by one pang of such self-reproach.

Shrink not then, my young friends, from labour. Wrestle mostly with the strong, and you shall yourselves be strong. It was a significant fable which made the founder of Rome the son of a god, but suckled him at no tender breast. His was a rough nurse, but a faithful one, and such is difficulty. God knows our frame, and, though he hath given us faculties to aspire, he hath made excellence the reward and attainment of educated strength, which grows by exertion.

Pater ipse colendi

Haud facilem esse viam voluit
 curis acuens mortalia corda.*

It is the consciousness but too many of us feel, that we did not then sufficiently fix ourselves in these habits of industry, which saddens our memory of youth. Learn from our errors. Regard yourselves, even now, as the men who must soon bear the honourable burdens of society, and as immortal men, the responsible servants of a good but just God. Every hour carelessly wasted sows seeds of regret for future years. Every hour of earnest study shall yield fruits of mature satisfaction. Every hour of communion with God, and practice of his precepts by divine help, has the earnest of an eternal reward.

* Virgil. Geor. I. 121—3.

But, while we make these confessions for your advantage, a great comfort is left us. We did not, as many have done, and as you may be tempted to do, *abandon the pursuit of a liberal education from temporary weariness or disgust*. It is but natural for a youth, full of fresh spirits, sometimes to tire of his quiet books, and persuade himself that such severe application to the study of science and letters is unnecessary to success in life; or that, from the windows of his seclusion, he should look with a degree of envy upon his equals in years, already bustling with Lilliputian self-importance about the precincts of trade. It is, however, very unhappy, if the parent yield to the solicitations of his inexperienced son, and permit him to withdraw from the honourable course, upon which he entered him with high hopes of his future distinction. Allow me to forewarn you against such ignoble weakness; and, if I may be heard by the guardians of your welfare, to dissuade them from consenting to such wishes, should they arise in your minds.

Even should you not choose a learned profession, you will need all the advantages which a full course of liberal study can give you. I speak with all possible respect for trade and commerce. The prejudice of dark ages, when a false aristocracy contemned labour in any form as a dishonourable necessity, is passing away, and should have no place in a philosophical or republican mind. To determine a man's

position in society by the honest calling he follows in life, is as contrary to the justice of good sense, as it is to the genius of our political institutions. The petty distinctions of social rank, which have obtained in this country, excite the deserved ridicule of calm observers from other lands. Nothing can be more absurd than pride of family, in people who scarcely know the birth-place of their grandfathers; or an assertion of superior nobility, by one who sells cloth in packages, over another who sells ribands by the yard; or by the importer of bristles in hogsheads, or of hides in cargoes, over him who makes brushes or shoes; or by the professional man over either, when he is in reality the paid servant of all. We are members of one body, necessarily dependent upon, and contributive to each other's well-being. To look down upon a neighbour because his way of serving the community differs from our own, is to despise ourselves. We should own no superiority but that of age, worth, and wisdom. The highest officer of our government is entitled to honour only as he faithfully ministers to the people's good; and for one, without any reference to parties or individuals, I can see no humiliation in the retirement of a statesman, conscious of truth, from his lost magistracy to his farm; while I rejoice that there is but a single step from the log-cabin to the Capitol. It proves the working like leaven of that blessed doc-

trine which our fathers wrote upon the bond of our confederacy, the native equality of the people.

3 Yet, certainly, cultivated intelligence is, as it should be, necessary to real respectability. The mere merchant is little better than a common carrier, and the mere mechanic than an animated machine, convenient and useful in supplying the needs and luxuries of the community. To win our trust and deference, they must prove themselves mentally and morally worthy of it. It is when, leaving behind them with the dust of their warehouses and workshops the thirst for gain, they show a liberal sympathy and a wise zeal for social advancement; when the wealth they may have acquired is devoted not to ostentatious display, but to the patronage of art, the furtherance of learning, science and religion; and when the poor receive their unreluctant aid, the stranger their cheering hospitality, and every man their kindly courtesy, that we own them as brothers in their manhood, and venerate them as fathers after their heads are crowned with a righteous hoariness. To acquire the elements of such a character some years may well be spent in cultivating a taste for graceful thought, habits of philosophical observation, and sound notions of Christian, political and economical ethics.

— It is sometimes said, that classical and kindred studies, with the associations they inspire, unfit the mind for the business of a rude and sordid world; but on the contrary, their influence is greatly needed to re-

strain and chasten it from contamination. The youth, who enters upon the bustling scene before his heart and judgment are instructed in better things, and fortified against temptation by generous thoughts within, soon may learn to regard dollars and cents as the gods of his idolatry, and, embracing the maxims of cunning selfishness which prevail around him, make his personal aggrandizement or low indulgence, the rule and aim of his endeavours. Far different will it be with him, whose leisure is spent with the books and intellectual converse he learned in early years to appreciate and love. He carries with him, wherever he goes, wise reflections on the past, large views of his social responsibilities, and aspiring hopes of a future and spiritual reward. Him, success will never make insane with pride, nor adversity overtake without strong consolation.

Sperat infestis, metuit secundis,
 Alteram sortem bene preparatum
 Pectus*

He can go forth from the ruin which is fatal to other men, like the philosopher of old from the burning city of his home, saying, "Me-ipsum porto," knowing that he has a wealth in his soul the world gave not and cannot take away.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the value of polite

* Hor. Car. II. 10.

learning to the professional man. Without it he can never well sustain the position in society, which is accorded to his profession. Great talent and industry are insufficient to cover entirely the defect, and, indeed, often make it more apparent. An illiterate or half educated physician, lawyer or clergyman, whatever may be his skill, acuteness or worth, is ever apt to betray his early disadvantages, and to be regarded with a pity not distantly allied to contempt; while, on the other hand, familiarity with good authors, gives an easy grace and smoothness to thought, language and even manner, which win, when stronger qualities might fail to force their way. The keenly polished scimitar of Damascus steel, in the hand of the slender but accomplished Saladin, was, as the instructive novelist tells us, a weapon not less effective than the mighty sword wielded by the giant strength of his lion-hearted rival. No one, who has had experience in these engagements, ever regrets an hour of his preparation, though many have lamented, when too late, having made it too brief.

Nor become impatient, because required to pay such close attention now to *rule* and *method*. There can be no excellence without a fundamental knowledge of those details; and early usage in such elements is required, as Quintillian expressed it, “Non modo acuere ingenia puerilia, sed exercere altissi-

man quoque eruditionem ac scientiam.”* The astronomer, in calculating the return of a comet, combines the simple rules of arithmetic he learned at school, nor is the most accute logician independent of the first step in syntax. To reach the apex of a pyramid, the traveller must begin at the bottom and go upward step by step. Man was not made to fly, and he who trusts himself, like another Icarus, to the wings of an ill-regulated imagination, may chance to find a grave as deep though less famous than a bay of the Ægean.

There is abundant time for this previous education. The fault of our youth is that of their country. They grow too fast, and become men and women too soon; and, like all hot-bed growths, they are likely to be weak in the core. Our girls have scarcely laid aside the bib of the nursery, before they are set at the head of households; and our lads assume the *toga virilis*, when as yet their *prætexta* should descend *usque ad talos*. In the primitive ages the elders sat as magistrates and counsellors in the gate. The Hebrews fixed the entrance upon public life at thirty years of age, and the Athenians allowed none to speak in their democratic assemblies, until the men of more than fifty had spoken. But with us the man of fifty is looked upon as little better than superannuated, and is thrust aside by the strip-

* Quin. Ins. Orator. I. 2.

ling whose chin is unconscious of a razor, vociferous applause answering his tumid declamation and dashing theories. It is because of this error, and not the lack of original talent, that so many ruinous novelties spring up and die at such cost to the nation, and that so little true excellence, and so few thorough scholars are to be found among us. He, who delays his public duties until the gristle of his mind has been hardened into bone, will be the more valuable servant of his country and ensure to himself a later but better fame. Be not impatient, young gentlemen. It is a long course and an arduous, that you have to run, and you shall lose nothing in the end by taking the advice I give you in sober earnestness, to "tarry here until your beards be grown."

There are, however, doubtless those (though I trust none among you) who may, without loss to themselves or others, be permitted to leave an attempted but unfinished education. The youth, who feels no sacred thirst for knowledge, whose dull ear finds no voice in nature, who reads without interest the histories of past ages; for whom Homer has no poetry, Horace no grace, the impetuous questioning of Demosthenes no spirit-stirring charm, and the full sonorous cadences of Cicero no majestic power; who is willing to remain on the asses' side of Euclid's bridge; who takes no more concern in science than to cheat his professor in the recitation, and to whom the philosophy of mind speaks of what he has not,

wastes here that time which might be better spent in tasks for which his sluggish nature fits him. Let him dig, sweep the streets, carry burdens, or, if he have fortune, lounge through life that public nuisance, an idle gentleman. No oracle within him says—

. . . . Me gelidum nemus
Nympharumque leves cum satyris chori
Secernunt populo. . . . *

Neither parental anxiety nor instructor's skill can raise him from the degradation he feels not.

Let me here also entreat you not to fall into the common error of supposing all wealth to consist of money or estate, and that he only advances the riches of his country, who increases its material commodities. If the safes and strong vaults of banks are reckoned among their valuables, if the courthouses and prisons of a state be deemed necessary at a large expense, and if the wages of labour be estimated correctly only by the comforts they can buy; surely they, who minister health to the sick by their skill, who arrange the moralities of law, who inspire by divine counsels the courage of tempted virtue, who write with patient pen the friendly volume for the hour of leisure, or who explore and meditate upon the laws of nature, that they may direct toil to the most ready and profitable employment, contribute largely to our

* Hor. Car. I. 1.

best possessions. Their harvests never fail, nor can the fire consume, nor the tempest destroy the products of their industry. But this doctrine has been stated to you far better than I can do it, by one to whose teachings (*haud inexpertus loquor*) his pupils love to listen, Professor Vethake, in his acute Treatise on Political Economy. I cannot speak what I think, for he hears me; but I must say, God bless him for rescuing the physician, the jurist, the divine, the man of letters, and the man of science, out of the same category with jugglers and opera dancers, where previous economists had placed us as unproductive consumers. For such nobler services you are now qualifying yourselves, and, if faithful, you shall find in them an imperishable reward, the approbation of conscience, the esteem of good men, and the benediction of God.

There is, my young friends, an advantage you enjoy as members of this University, upon which I must dwell somewhat at length. I do not now refer to the ability and paternal zeal of your instructors. You know their worth. Well might they be compared with those of any institution of our land, were not such comparison invidious, and on this occasion out of taste. They need no encomium, and I believe that you will long regard them with affectionate gratitude. That, of which I would now speak, is the privilege you have of residing within the bosom of your families, while you prosecute your academic studies.

Most of our colleges are situate in remote towns, where, consequently, the youth, who enter them, are compelled to live in cloisters and commons; a pernicious and unnatural custom, which has come down to us from the dark ages. It would certainly be accounted an absurd proposition, of a hundred or more lads, from fifteen to twenty years of age, to leave the parental roof, and combine to keep, what is termed Bachelors' Hall, away from a father's eye, a mother's care and a sister's love. Yet what better is the arrangement to which I allude, and to the effects of which so many persons consign their offspring? It may be said, that they are placed under the guardianship of wise and good men, and secluded also from the temptations to vice which abound in cities. But are the occasional meetings, and periodical visits to their dormitories, of a studious man, however faithfully inclined, and sleeping withal in the same building, a compensation for the moral restraints of home, its sacred threshold and guarded repose? Is vice confined to our larger towns? or is it not true, that where vicious appetite craves indulgence there will be venal profligacy to grant it? Is there not danger of contamination when a youth, at the age when he feels the strength of recent passions most, and is the least prepared to resist them, has been thrown into immediate contact and unrestrained communication with ill-taught or ill-disposed companions, already familiar with vice?

Dedit hanc contagio labem,
 Et dabit in plures; sicut grex totus in agris,
 Unius scabie cadit, et porrigine porci;
 Uvaeque conspecta livorem ducit ab uva.*

Nay, will not a natural impatience of espionage, however tenderly exercised, prompt a wish to elude it? Not one of us, who have had experience of such college life, but could tell sad stories of ready means to cheat tutors, and turn the war adroitly upon them; of festive meetings, if not worse practices, within a few yards of the honest men's beds, and midnight excursions through the unwatched door to haunts of sin without. Not one of us, but has seen companions, who came ingenuous and blushing from their pure homes, turned by the influence of evil example into brazen profligates, and lost to virtue forever. There have been, it is true, many instances of general religious good among students in colleges, for which we should give God thanks; but an argument from this in their favour is, at the least, of doubtful propriety. It was the conservative influence of the Holy Spirit overruling error for good, and affords no sufficient warrant for encountering an obvious danger.

Parents, who become impatient of the anxious care their sons require, and are aware of their own deficiencies, though they take no pains to do better, are readily brought to think that they can obtain for

* Juv. Sat. II. 78—81.

them a better guardianship in such institutions. In this some are right; I mean those who cannot deny themselves selfish pleasures for their children's good, and who cannot refrain from luxurious excess in their very homes, so that by their own families, "*pudenda dictu spectantur.*" Well might Quintillian say, for such people, who were common in his day, and not altogether unknown in ours, "*Utinam liberorum nostrorum mores non ipsi perderemus.*"* But where parental responsibility is felt, and a pious anxiety to train up souls born unto them, by precept, government and example, for usefulness here and heaven hereafter, it is a most grave error to suppose that any asylum is so safe for youth as home, or any guardianship so effectual as that which God in nature and his word has ordained. A young lad, who can steal out from his father's dwelling at night to practice his vice, and afterward meet his mother's loving eye and his sister's pure embrace without compunction, is already lost beyond any power, short of Almighty grace, to reform. Any change of circumstances must be for the worse.

Besides, I ask of parents who thus (except where necessity compels,) send their children to boarding schools and colleges where the cloister system prevails, what right they have, from indolence or any other motive, to invent contrivances to alter the or-

* Quin. Ins. Orat. I. 2.

der of nature and providence? How dare they delegate to others that sacred office, most resembling His own, which God by giving them offspring has made theirs? When God places an infant in a mother's arms, he says more plainly than in words, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay thee thy wages;" and to every father, who sees the first gleaming of immortal intelligence in the face of his babe, he sends as emphatic command to walk before that soul as its guide and guard. How can they, without treason against Heaven, send them beyond their sight and reach at the most critical period of life? Where in the Book of God can they find permission so to do? Where can they read any exceptions allowed to the duty of a personal superintendence and exertion? How shall they acquit themselves in the judgment of having caused the evils that may result from such an abandonment of their charge?

A pious and eloquent prelate (Jeremy Taylor), in his *Considerations upon the Infancy of Jesus*, has earnestly exhorted Christian mothers to follow the example of the Virgin Mary in nursing their children; and even his enlightened mind acquired some arguments for that duty, from a discourse of a heathen philosopher (Favorinus) with his friend, which has been preserved by Aulus Gellius.* Both insist that

* *Noctes Atticæ*, XII. 1.

she, from whom the child derives its natural nourishment, is the mother both in character and affection, rather than the one who brought it forth. Æsop, in Phædrus, illustrates the same truth in his fable of the lamb seeking its foster dam among the goats. (*Facit parentes bonitas, non necessitas.**) But may not the argument be carried farther with even greater force? Do not parents lose their claim to filial duty and affection, by giving over their children's growing years and expanding character to the disposition of others? Need they wonder if those children should grow up unlike them in every thing but name, feature, and the unloving indifference with which they repay early neglect?

Some writers on education have thought, that the sending of a young lad to a distant school or college, is of use to give him a more manly temper, and an early habit of relying upon himself, from the necessity of maintaining his own in such a miniature world; while on the other hand he is likely to grow up soft, indolent, and timid, in the indulgence and retirement of home. Mr. Locke (if I remember rightly) thinks that the influence of sisters upon brothers is particularly hurtful in this respect, and urges their separation, lest the girls should become hoidenish, and the boys effeminate. Their theory, both as to its ends and means, is directly in the face of

* Fab. III. 15.

the social constitution God has ordained for us. It might do, if our youth were to be trained up like those of Sparta, mere brutish machines, insensible to any gentler emotions than pride of warlike strength and a false love of country. But the cultivation of moral affections is, above all, important to form the character of a Christian gentleman, the friend of man, and the servant of God. Love should ever be, as it was in Eden, as it shall be in heaven, the ruling principle of our nature, and engaged first and constantly in the service of education. The softer and the stronger qualities should be developed together. It might be injurious to his character if the youth were shut up entirely with women. He needs a man's example and a man's control. But we have the authority of God for asserting, that "it is not good for man to be alone." It is as true of his younger life, as of his maturity. The same female influence, which is the conservative charm of manhood, softening our manners, nor suffering us to be savage and selfish, must be impressed upon the growing soul, if we would have it complete in human beauty. Man was not complete until feminine graces were added to masculine strength. He was as the rock without verdure, the oak without its foliage, and the lyre before it is tuned. How beautifully does this appear in a well-regulated home? When the gentleness of a mother's counsel prevail not, the father's deeper voice may enforce; when the

father's rougher hand has fretted the sensitiveness of the young heart, the mother's nicer instincts apply the balm to the healthful irritation. In either case, parental authority founds its right in gratitude, and asks obedience as the proof of love. But the duty of the mother is the earlier and stronger. The child grew nearer to her heart, and the youth is more under her eye. He receives more from her than from his father. (*Ex matris etiam corpore et animo recens indoles configuratur.**) From whom did the Gracchi derive their eloquence?† From whom the young Timothy his knowledge of the truth? Nay, I need not quote examples, for they are too many not to be obvious.

Happy too is that young man who has grown up in the society of sisters emulous of a mother's purity and grace! They refine his heart, his thought, and his manners. Grossness of imagination recoils upon him as an insult to them. Female character is to him, for their sakes, almost a holy thing. The flowers which they nurture, or arrange in harmonious groups, shed perfume around his home, and the melodies of their young joy, breathed from the sweetest instrument human ear has ever heard, a female voice, fill its atmosphere

* Favor. ap. Aul. Gell.

† Legimus epistolas Corneliæ, matris Gracchorum; apparet, filios non tam in gremio educatos, quam in sermone matris.—*Cic. Brut.* 58.

with music, winning him from external temptation; or, as they lean upon his arm and fondly look up to him for protection, he learns the blessedness of man's strength in supporting the weak and guarding the precious.

Sadly different is the ordinary experience of a youth boarding in a distant college. Some natural tears he may shed on leaving the loved familiar groupe, but he is not without something of the prodigal's satisfaction, at venturing forth from the restraints of the parental roof. He finds himself among new companions, and under a new discipline. The lesson, the precept, the warning come from the lips and authority of strangers, backed by stern laws and severe penalties. Venerable his teachers may be, and kindly faithful in disposition and deportment, yet do they rarely succeed in making him regard them other than as masters whom he has not learned to love, and obeys chiefly because he fears them. They watch him, or profess to watch him, by night and by day, and public opinion among his fellows pronounces them natural enemies, whom it is clever to deceive, while conscience chides him not for ingratitude. All the week he is urged by them through difficult studies, and religion is associated in his mind with prayer at morning twilight in a cold chapel, black marks for absences, and Sunday sermons pronounced by the same voice, which the day before had cross-examined him on Fluxions, or rated him for errors in Prosody. No chastened pleasures await his

leisure hours. They are spent in rough horse-play, in prurient conversation, in concealed dissipation, or idle lounging,—in just such a manner as youth, who think themselves men while yet they are boys, might be expected to spend them. How different is the commons-table, often ill served, except immediately before the presiding officer, from the pleasing family board with its natural courtesies and confiding interchange of thought! No lady's eye overlooks them as they scramble like boors for the hasty meal. No woman's tidy hand has arranged their wardrobes, and no approving smile rewards and encourages decency of dress and carriage. A college student's wardrobe! What a collection it is of toeless stockings, buttonless wristbands, and uncared-for rents, some mothers can tell who have examined the trunk they saw packed so neatly a few months before. A college student's room—shared perchance with one to whom neatness is an unknown quality; its littered, unscrubbed, uncarpeted floor; its confused and broken furniture; its close atmosphere heated by a greasy stove and redolent of tobacco; its bed a lounging-place by day, whose pillows have never been shaken or its sheets smoothed by other than the college porter, who intermitted for such ministry the carrying of wood or the blacking of boots; its dim panes festooned with ancient cobwebs, through which the noonday sun looks yellow as in a London fog,—it is indescribable as chaos. Wo to him whom sickness seizes in such an

abode! Kind nurses he may have, but how rough! and with what heavy tread, and strange notions of the *materia medica*! Vainly does the fevered eye look around for mother, or sister, or time-honoured servant! Vainly does the fevered thirst crave the grateful drink their hands once pressed to his lips, when sick at home! There is none to sprinkle the fragrant spirit on his brow, or bathing his feet in the attempered water, to wipe them dry and wrap them warm. Alas! poor youth; he has a mother, he has sisters, he has a home, where kindness might have made a luxury of sickness—but they have sent him away to suffer among strangers.

Can it be, my friends, that such slipshod, unkempt, out-of-elbowed, bearish young men are the sons of our respectable families in a course of education to be gentlemen, and to take their place in polite society? Can it be that well-bred Christian parents have wilfully thrust them forth into such associations and dangers? Yes, some of them have gone from our own city, where one of the best collegiate institutions in the land is at their fathers' door. Shame upon the Philadelphians who thus dishonour what they should foster with a jealous care! Congratulate yourselves, young gentlemen, that you are not among them, and that God has given you fathers and mothers who need not deny you, and will not, the sacred comforts of home, while you enjoy all the advantages of thorough instruction from those who may consult the

parental heart in the exercise of discipline, and invoke parental anxiety to assist them in watching over your moral and intellectual welfare.

For my part, I look upon boarding schools, whether for girls or boys, and boarding colleges, with the same feelings with which I look upon a foundling hospital. The inmates may be of a larger growth, but almost as unnaturally abandoned. There may be those among them, who are better guarded than they would have been under their parents' watch; but they are to be pitied for their perilous and uncomfortable lot. Circumstances may compel parents to send their offspring from home, and in such cases we must allow the force of the classic maxim—" *Necessitas . . . quicquid cogit, excusat.*" But I would entreat them, whenever it is possible, to place their sons in worthy families, *where a lady sits at the head of the table*, and her influence is felt in the sacredness of a household.

My young friends, one parting counsel more and I have done. Life to you is full of promise, and may its best blessings be yours! The esteem of the good, deserved by a wise and generous devotion to the interests of society, and the approving consciousness of well-spent time, are indeed rich rewards, that may well excite your determined zeal. But life is short.

Our duties and our pleasures here shall soon (who can tell how soon?) terminate in the grave. The autumnal season has a parable for us, and the voice of the dying year, as it moans through the leafless trees, speaks to the meditative mind in the mournful cadence of that eloquent participle we have no word to translate, "*Tu quoque moriture!*" Yet we shall not altogether die. We are children of immortality. There is another life than this, another Judge than man, another ordeal than human opinion. We shall be profited nothing if we gain the whole world and lose our souls. Blessed be God! He has had compassion upon our need and danger. Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord, is the Friend, the Advocate and Brother of all who trust in his love. He himself has walked the sands of life's desert, that, guided by his holy footsteps, we may find the way to that better land whither he has gone before us. He himself has fought the battles of life's temptations, that we might know Him to be ready to succour us when we are tempted. He, the babe of Bethlehem, the youth before whom in the temple the boast of hoary wisdom was dumb, loves the grateful confidence of a young heart. Seek Him earnestly. Look to Him always; and whatever be your lot in this passing scene, glory, honour and immortality shall be yours, when, over earth and the years that revolve around it, the waters of an eternal deep shall have rolled its engulfing waves.

Remember, also, that with all the advantages by which your fortunate youth is surrounded, you are, under God, the disposers of your own future interest. Your success for time and eternity depends upon your faithfulness to yourselves. Difficulties must be yours; but they are ever occasions of greater glory or of greater shame. I take, then, my leave of you with the words of the Gods' fabled messenger to Prometheus :

Be mindful, now you cannot err unwarned ;
Nor lay the blame on Fate, nor think that God
Afflicts his creatures from a blind caprice :
The fault is yours alone ; if, by neglect
Infatuate, you have wrapt the fatal net
Of sin inextricable 'round your feet.*

Or in the better language of Christ's apostle,
"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for

* The translation I give is free, but the attentive reader of the original can hardly fail to trace a strong parallel between the idea of the Greek poet and that of the Christian apostle, St. James, I. 13, 14, 15.

Α'λλ' οὖν μέμνησθ' ἀγὼ προλέγω
Μηδὲ πρὸς αὐτῆς θηρὰ θείσαι
Μέμνησθε τύχην, μηδὲ ποτ' εἴπηθ'
Ὡς Ζεὺς ὕμᾱς εἰς ἀπρόοπτον
Πῆμ' εἰσέβαλεν
Μὴ δῆτ', αὐταὶ δ' ὕμᾱς αὐτάς.
Εἰδύϊαι γὰρ κοῦκ ἐξαίφνης
Οὐδὲ λαβραῖας
Εἰς ἀπέραντον δίκτυον αὐτῆς
Εἰμπαλεχθήσεσθ' ὑπ' ἀνοίας.

Æschylus, Prom. Vinc. 1071—9.

when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted of evil. Neither tempteth he any man."

May the victory and the crown be given to you all!

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